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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EDUCATIONAL BROADCASTERS

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FORECAST OF ETV STATION ACTIVATIONS

Predictions are always dangerous, especially when they concern the immediate future because of the greater risk of recall. Nevertheless, estimates are necessary to effective planning. In the course of preparing for educational television expansion under the Educational Television Facilities Act (P.L. 87-447), administered by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, inquiries as to expected station expansion were sent to the legally designated educational television authorities in 39 States (and Puerto Rico) where such authorities exist. In addition, inquiries were sent to informed leaders in a number of States including the 13 States (and the District of Columbia) where State ETV authorities are not now designated. Responses were received from 46 of the 52 jurisdictions. While the individual responses are privileged, totals based on them will prove of interest to those with educational, operational, or programing responsibility in educational television.

During the period from July, 1964 to June, 1965, applications were predicted from the 46 jurisdictions which would require a total of \$16.1 million in Federal matching assistance. In addition to the predicted expansion projects for existing stations, it was expected that a total of 65 new stations would be activated. The breakdown by NAEB Regions is as follows:

13 New Stations in the 11 Northeastern States of Region I (No reply from 1 State)
22 New Stations in the 11 Southeastern States of Region II (No reply from 2 States)
14 New Stations in the 5 Midwestern States of Region III
3 New Stations in the 6 North Central States of Region IV
6 New Stations in the 8 Central States of Region V (No reply from 3 States)
5 New Stations in the 10 Far Western States of Region VI

It should be remembered that State authorities are not in every case aware of plans being made by private groups and independent non-profit organizations. Additional requests from these agencies can be expected.

It was predicted in February, 1963 that a total of 31 new stations would begin construction by July, 1964. As we enter the final quarter of the first full year of the program, this estimate still seems reasonable, even though a few applicants have encountered temporary difficulties in meeting the assurances required under Public Law 87-447. It is not unreasonable to hope that by July 1965 after two years of Educational Television Facilities Act operation, the number of educational television stations in the United States will more than double.

This Washington Report was prepared for the NAEB by Dr. John W. Bystrom, Assistant to the Under Secretary, for Educational Television in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

Requests for Federal assistance for the expansion of existing stations range widely from \$15,000 to \$500,000, and it is difficult to predict the average amount to be requested in the future. The range for new stations is understandably narrower and the average grant award continues to remain very close to the average of \$175,000 upon which estimates have been based since the beginning of the program. It seems unlikely that the average grant for a new station will go below that amount; on the contrary with the short supply of used equipment and a trend to increased technical sophistication it is probable that cost averages will rise. Evidence of the large number of citizens benefiting from these expenditures is provided by the 26 applications for new station grants so far received. Based on total populations reported within proposed grade B contours we find 1,860,000 persons to be the average number within the service area of a proposed new station.

It is reassuring to note that the total expected activations reported by respondents is not inconsistent with the rate of authorization requests being made to the Federal Communications Commission. Construction Permits which were granted on the average of 8 a year in the period from 1951 to 1960, jumped to 20 in 1962 and to 29 in 1963. At present there are 27 outstanding Construction Permits and 37 pending applications of which 7 were received during the first quarter of this calendar year. In short, application activity before the FCC lends credence to the survey result.

A principal controlling factor in development will be the availability of State and local non-Federal matching funds. While our knowledge is unavoidably sketchy, what we do know is encouraging to the realist. Information is largely limited to funds appropriated by State legislatures specifically for ETV construction. Of the new activation applications so far accepted by HEW, only a third are dependent for assistance on State ETV construction appropriations. It seems a reasonable guess however, that as much as 50% of the new activations in 1965 will have their non-Federal matching provided through earmarked State appropriation. We know now that at least 19 of the stations planned for fiscal 1965 have non-Federal matching funds already available through State legislative action. Because the legislatures of the large majority of States meet on odd years, 1964 will see few appropriations for educational television, but several millions of dollars are already assured. Furthermore, it is evident that the sessions beginning in 1965 will have a sizable number of carefully drawn ETV construction bills supported by seasoned advocates with several years of spade work behind them.

There is a realistic basis for planning on approximately 25-30 station starts during fiscal 1964 and, barring the unexpected, on as many as 50-60 additional starts during fiscal 1965. This rate of growth will impose a tremendous burden upon the profession for which it must prepare if the movement is not to be stunted or fall into disarray because of a failure to resolve the administrative and management problems which will accompany large scale activation.

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